



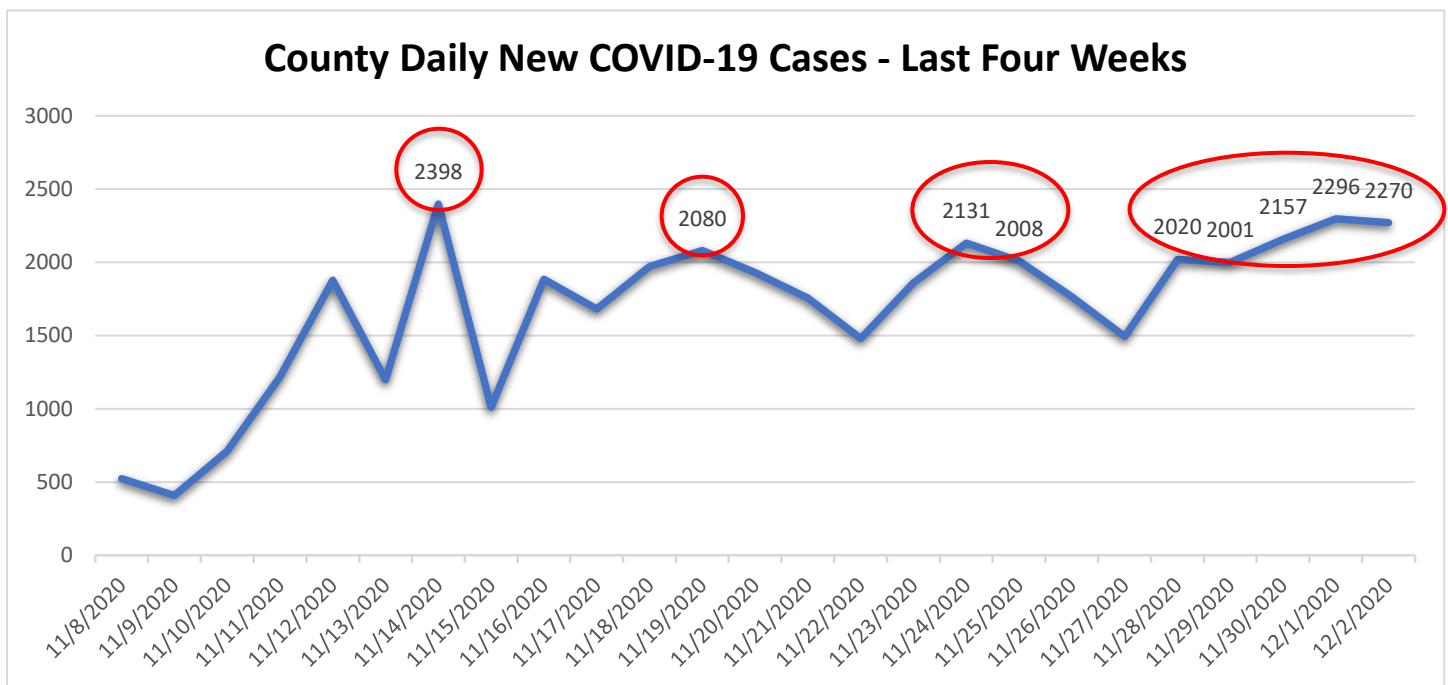
# MESSAGE

FROM MAYOR DAN GELBER

This morning, Friday, December 4, the State Department of Health has reported that COVID-19 cases in Miami-Dade County surpassed 234,000 and 3,868 people in our County have succumbed to the virus. Also, Wednesday, the State of Florida surpassed one million infections.

So, let's unpack a few things.

[All the data points](#) we rely on are confirming that what we thought might happen is happening. We are in the midst of a surge and, without a concerted effort to reduce the spread of the virus, things will only get worse.



We are now seeing regular daily infections of over 2,000 in just our County. We last saw that volume of infections in July. The percentage of those infected has also been hovering around 10%. And worst of all, each day over the last week more than 100 people were so sick they needed hospitalization. Last time we saw numbers like this was in early August. To understand the rate of increase, the first three days of November around 40 people each day required hospitalization. So, just this last month there has been a 150% increase. And the thing about hospitalizations is that they are not susceptible to distortion from late submitted labs, or a surge of people taking tests as we saw before Thanksgiving. You are just so sick, that you require hospital care. So, this surge is real.

A few other things about [these figures](#). First, while these numbers are much higher than they've been for months, they are significantly lower than at the peak of the summer surge. For instance, in mid-July, 235 people checked into the hospital in Miami-Dade in a single day. Also, due to improved treatment protocols and

therapeutics, the mortality rate has improved so that the survival rate is much better. But it's pretty clear we are going back up the hill, and no matter how much better we are at treating this virus, it remains plenty deadly. The thing we need to remember is that the impact we're feeling today was baked into the community weeks ago, when the number of positive cases was actually lower, and before Thanksgiving. So, we have to assume for the next few weeks things are going to get worse as we begin to feel the effect of infections that showed themselves this week.

But that doesn't mean we are inalterably headed toward a surge equal to or greater than what we experienced over the summer. We can protect ourselves. I recognize that this is the time of year when we gather with friends and loved ones. To eat, laugh and pray. But please wear the mask. Be smart about what you do. If you are older, have health issues that make you susceptible to bad outcomes, or if you live with someone like that, govern yourself as if everyone you meet might be infected. There is no reason to panic, but there is clear reason to avail yourself and your loved ones of appropriate safeguards.

I still continue to receive emails and communication arguing that wearing a mask is not helpful. Some of them repeat misinformation. Some have even threatened me with physical harm. I have no idea why this has become such an emotional and political issue to some. I recognize you can find any convenient opinion you seek on the internet or on cable television. But to be sure, the physicians, scientists and public health professionals overwhelmingly believe wearing a mask is an effective bulwark against this disease. The doctors entrusted with control of this virus, Dr. Fauci, Dr Birx, and all our local experts are unanimous that this is what we should be doing.

Here is Dr. Marty, a Miami Beach resident and one of the real experts on infectious diseases: None of us signed up for this. Not me and not you. But it is what we are confronting...at least for a few more months. So please listen to those who know, and be smart and safe.

Thanks for your patience, calm and sacrifice. Please stay healthy and mostly at home.